is yet to notify Wagah on their side for trade on all goods on a permanent basis. In May, 2005 Pakistan opened Wagah LCS for import of selected commodities from India like live animals, halal meats, onion, potato, tomato and garlic which is still operative. During the Composite Dialogue in August, 2005, Indian side requested Pakistan to open this land route on a permanent basis for enhancing the bilateral trade. Pakistan noted the request and stated that they were studying the infrastructural and administrative implications of opening of land route on permanent basis. Developing the infrastructure at Attari is a priority project in the India's proposed Integrated Check Posts Project. During the last round of Composite Dialogue in August, 2007 both sides briefed the state of infrastructure and proposed plan for development on each side. Back to back movement of trucks for loading and unloading became operational from at Attari-Wagah land Custom Stations since October, 2007. Other measures for improving infrastructure at Attari on the Indian side are also being considered.

MIR in States

2499. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact the Government is planning to sanction Manufacturing Investment Region (MIR) in some States;

(b) if so, the details in this regard with the names of States where MIR likely to be setup; and

(c) whether Government will consider granting financial assistance for setting up of MIR in Punjab also and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL POLICY AND PROMOTION, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR): (a) to (c) Setting up of the Manufacturing Investment Regions (MIRs) in the country is one of the initiatives to encourage manufacturing. The proposal is at a conceptual stage and no framework/draft policy has been formulated so far. Proposal to set up MIR in Punjab has been received.

Continuous increase in price of cement

2500. SHRI KAMAL AKHTAR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been a continuous increase in the price of cement during the last two years;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the reasons behind this price increase has been making of cartel by the cement companies; and

(c) whether Government will consider to constitute some Regulating Agency to control this situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL POLICY AND PROMOTION, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR): (a) and (c) The prices of cement increased sharply between December, 2005 and March, 2007 due to mismatch between demand and supply. The Government took a number

of measures to increase the supply of cement in the market to cater to increased demand. These include facilitating import by reducing the import duty on cement to 'Nil', removal of countervailing duty and special additional customs duty. Further, MMTC Ltd., a Government of India enterprises, TANCEM, a State Government enterprises of Tamil Nadu and M/s. Puducherry Agro Services Industries Corporation (PASIC) have been given a special dispensation to import cement under the provisions of Cement (Quality Control) Order, 2003 to enable availability of significant quantities of imported cement in the market. With these measures, the average price of cement has stabilized to a large extent showing an increase of only 4.44% between March, 2007 and March, 2008. The setting up of Cement Regulatory Authority is, therefore, not considered necessary.

(b) MRTP Commission, a quasi judicial body, is already seized of the matter regarding cartelization by the cement companies.

FDI in electronic and sports goods sectors

2501. SHRI P.R. RAJAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is planning to allow FDI in retail in specific sectors such as electronics and sports goods; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL POLICY AND PROMOTION, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR): (a) and (b) As per the extant policy, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is not permitted in retail trade except in single brand product retailing. The policy on FDI is reviewed on a continuing basis through an inter-Ministerial consultation process with a view to rationalization/liberalization of the policy. The Government has assigned a study to the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER) on the impact of organized retailing on the unorganized retail sector, as also another study to the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) on growth linkages of FDI in India. Any review of the sectoral FDI policy in retail, including for the electronics and sports goods, would await the submission of these two reports and their consideration by the Government.

Lowering price of cement

2502. SHRIMATI JAYA BACHCHAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government had warned cement industry of being taken over in case the price of cement was not lowered;

(b) if so, whether the cement industry has heeded the warning and reduced the price of cement, if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the action Government are contemplating against the industry?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL POLICY AND PROMOTION, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR): (a) to (c) No, Sir. The prices of cement increased sharply between December,